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Vast Search Launched for 137 U.S. Defectors

The Johnson Administration has opened one of the most intensive worldwide "man-hunts" in years.

U.S. intelligence-military-diplomatic authorities are seeking to determine the whereabouts of all U.S. citizens who have defected to Russia or satellite countries since the end of World War II.

This secret information is being gathered on 137 U.S. defectors, including a number of American women, by the Defense Department, State Department, Justice Department and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Triggered by the Warren Commission's probe of the assassination of the late President Kennedy, the four-pronged intelligence inquiry is designed to determine how many of these defectors have been permitted to return to the U.S.

Since more than half of the defectors are either military deserters or former U.S. government employees, the four agencies are checking to see how many of the "turn-

coats" might be potential Lee Harvey Oswalds.

Oswald, an admitted Maxist, defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, after serving in the Marine Corps. After living in Russia more than 2½ years, Oswald was allowed to return to the U.S. in 1962 by a State Department official. The official also arranged a government loan to pay for Oswald's return trip with wife and baby.

The surveillance list of 137 U.S. defectors, still under preparation, is expected to grow to more than 200 before it is completed. Some intelligence experts believe the list will exceed 500.

Already, it carries the names of the ten "most wanted," including three former employees of the super-secret National Security Agency.

The NSA defectors—Bernon F. Mitchell, William H. Martin and Victor Hamilton—are reported to be in the Soviet Union, where they have been assigned to breaking U.S. codes.